wrapped body is lowered by straps. Then two men descend and arrange the body in the niche in such a way that the pit is on its right and the head is turned towards the west. The body, the burial of which I witnessed, was placed stretched out on its back. A squatting position is said to have been originally customary. (68)

68. G. Fritsch, Die Eingeborenen Südafrikas, ethnographisch und anatomisch beschrieben, mit Atlas, Breslau, 1872.

The niche is closed by thick brushwood, which covers the entire floor of the grave. There is a layer of stones on top of the brushwood. [317] The grave is then completely filled with earth or sand and a hill formed. Stones which are piled up in several layers above the ground complete it. A large stone, vertically set, rising half an arm's length above ground or sometimes a gemsbok horn mark the head end of the grave. This method of burial offers the best protection for the corpse from hyenas and probably can be explained from this point of view.

All the relatives and friends, even down to the smallest children who normally do no work, help to fill the grave. As we placed flowers, they threw aromatic buchu powder on the mound.

Whoever returns to a grave after a long absence places a stone, a piece of wood or a branch there. The same thing is done by people who come to a place and find a friend no longer alive, as a symbol that he too helped to bury him.

Whoever dies quietly, continues to live as mildly in the dreams of the survivors. Whoever dies violently or deliriously, appears during the night to the survivors as a horrible ghost. But the question whether every departed one continues to live in some form or other as a shade I have never found considered. Their phantasy ends in the story of the hare, whose cowardice defrauded men of the immortality which the moon had promised them (cf. folk tale XXX).

Rain, storm or heavy clouds that appear about a week after death are sometimes thought to be a sign that the gall is flowing out of the decaying body. Also each change in weather, calm, storm, cold, heat, and thunderstorm, are thought to be a visitation of the dead. The Hottentots once believed a large cirrus cloud to be a visitation of a dead white man.

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[309] [895] been reported of the Naman. The motive assigned by Kolb to the custom was the fear of the women that if they were to have intercourse with a man who had not had this operation performed upon him they would bear twins. Most other writers state that its purpose was to increase the swiftness of the man in running!

Finger mutilation, already noticed in the Bushmen, was also common to all the Hottentots, especially among women.[1] It consisted of the removal of one or two joints of the little finger, and sometimes of the first joint of the next finger as well. The reason for this [785] [751] custom is doubtful. It has variously been looked upon as a sign of mourning, or, especially in the case of children, as designed to be magically protective. Kolb, Wikar, and other early writers state that [587] it was confined to those women who had married more than once, a fresh joint being cut off before every fresh marriage. There is [854] ample evidence, however, to show that it was also practised on children, even on small babies. The data available are not sufficient to enable us to determine the underlying motive with accuracy. The corresponding custom among the Bushmen, as we have seen, seems to be practised mainly as a protective rite on infants whose immediate predecessors have died, and this may also have been the meaning in some cases of the Hottentot custom, although it is probable that the motive differed in various tribes.

Scarification seems also to have been employed among the Cape Hottentots, and still is among the Naman, in connection with a large variety of ceremonies—boys' puberty rites, hunting rites, remarriage, healing of disease, etc.[2] It consists in a number of small cuts made by the officiating person on the chest of the individual concerned, and the wounds are rubbed with ashes, producing slight permanent scars. The different occasions on which it is practised will be discussed more fully below. The perforation of the nasal septum and of the lobe of the ear for the reception of ornaments is also found, the latter especially being very common.

[1] The relevant literature is summarized by Walk, *op. cit.*, 884 *ff.*

[2] Walk, *op. cit.*, 884; *cf. also* Olpp, "Aus dem Sagenschatze der Nama-Khoi-Khoin," 40–1; Wikar, *op. cit.*, 93–4; (Mrs.) A. W. Howitt, "The Conception of Sons among the Hottentots," 67–9 *et passim*.

½ [i.e., excision of the left testicle. – Analyst]

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The funeral over, everybody returned to the kraal. Here, according to Kolb, the men and the women again squatted apart in front of the hut, repeating their wailing and frequently calling on the dead person by name. At last silence fell, and the eldest of the men arose, entered the circle first of the men and then of the women, and besprinkled them with his urine. Then he entered the hut through the door, took some ashes from the hearth, came out through the opening previously made in the back, and strewed the ashes over all the people, who rubbed them into their bodies. Some of the near relatives also took cowdung and smeared it over their arms, legs and body. Then they all separated and went to their huts. The family of the deceased, however, did not dare to enter the hut where he had died, but sought accommodation with other people.

765 ● [514]

On the following day all the huts in the kraal were taken down and the people left the locality; but the hut of the dead person was left standing with all its belongings. Nothing might be taken from it. Before the departure, the heir of the dead person slaughtered a sheep, and such of the other near relatives as could afford it did the same. All who had been present at the funeral were then feasted with this meat. The caul of the sheep he had slaughtered was thickly strewn with *knobs*, twisted into a cord, and hung round the neck of the heir, where he had to wear it until it rotted away. The other relatives likewise hung about their necks the cauls of the sheep they had killed. Poor relatives, if they could not afford to slaughter an animal and hence were unable to procure a caul, shaved their heads in furrowed ridges as a sign that they too were in mourning.

765 768

It is uncertain from Kolb's account just which people were expected to mourn, and whether the signs of mourning varied according to the relationship of the mourners to the deceased. An earlier description speaks of all the men of a large kraal having their heads shaved as a sign of mourning, but as the dead person concerned was their chief, the usage in this case may not have been the one customary in ordinary deaths.[1] At the same time, there is nothing to indicate whether the funerary rites for chiefs differed in any way from those for commoners. There is also no clear indication how long the period of mourning lasted, and whether any special prohibitions and other usages had to be observed by the mourners during this period. Kolb simply says that the lamentations might be kept up for three or four days or even a week after the death, but throws no further light on the question.

765 [766]

[1] Gustav Mohlenfels, *Reisen in Süd-Afrika*, I, 229.

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His whole account, indeed, leaves much to be desired. Its main points of interest, perhaps, are the usages preliminary to burial, the purification ceremony afterwards and the funeral feast, and the abandonment of the locality. The description of the funeral itself is very sketchy, and unfortunately no other writer gives further details.

The series of rites connected with death and burial among the Naman have been more fully described,[1] but as found at present they have undergone some disintegration. "They have been telescoped, as it were, into one another," says Mrs. Hoernlé, "so that often enough as many of them as remain are all carried out on the same day, after the burial." These rites fall into the category of those associated with the conception of *//nau*, and in them the sacramental meal and the cleansing are still of importance. After a death not only the immediate relatives are afflicted, but also the larger family circle of the deceased. If it is a husband who has died, the wife becomes *//nau*, but his relatives—brothers, sisters, parents—also have to perform certain special rites before the ceremonial meal, and in a lesser degree all members of the kraal who take part in the proceedings. Similarly, if a woman dies her husband becomes *//nau*, while her own blood relatives perform certain other rites; and when a child has died both parents become *//nau* and have to undergo the usual rites associated with this condition.

As soon as a death has taken place, the body of the person is prepared for burial. Formerly according to a description given by Schoppmann, the hands were crossed over the breast, and the head bent forward between the legs, which were sharply folded at the knee. The body was then fastened together and wrapped in skins.[2] Hahn adds that before the body was wrapped up in this way or sewn up in skins, the son of the dead man first killed a goat and smeared the body of his father with the blood [3]—a practice not mentioned by other writers. Nowadays the eyes of the dead person are closed, then the body is washed by old women, and stretched flat on its back; the arms lie along the sides, and the hands, palm downward, are folded

[1] The principal authorities are: Schultze, *op. cit.*, 316–17; Bleek and Kling, "The Funeral Ceremonies of the Hottentots," *Trans. R. Soc. S. Afr.*, II (1910), 223–5; Hoernlé, "The Conception of Soul," 79–81; *cf.* also Alexander, "Beobachtungen im Great-Namalande," 205; Hahn, "Die Nama-Hottentotten," 333; Schultze, *Zum-Kalahari-Hottentotten*, 99–100; von Francois, *Nama und Damara*, 206.

[2] *Op. cit.*, 77.

[3] "Beerdigung von Kommandeuren," in Meinhof, *op. cit.*, 1918, 144.

[4] *Loc. cit.*

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in the heap and projecting above a foot or so, indicates the head end of the grave; ceremonially also the grounbok horn used in excavating the grave is placed in this position. Everybody adds a stone or twig to the mound, which is afterwards strewn with ducks. Any relative or friend of the dead person unable to be present at the funeral will also, on visiting the kraal, go to the grave and place something of the sort on the mound. Cold water is likewise thrown on the grave of a person newly buried, and often the men return again the next day to throw more water on the grave. "The reason given me," says Mrs. Hoernlé, "was that it hardened the grave, so that no wild beasts could dig there, but the reason given to Theophilus Hahn in the 'seventies of last century was that it 'cooled the soul of the deceased'."[1]

When the people come back from the grave, all the inmates of the kraal, except the bereaved family and the near relatives, who must on no account touch water, wash their hands in cold water, which is placed in front of the dead man's hut. Cold water is also sprinkled on the place in the hut where the body was lying before it was taken to be buried. The explanation given for this washing is that the people would get sick if they did not do so, and the cold water sprinkled in the hut also prevents the sickness that was there from spreading.[2] Meanwhile, the dead man's relatives slaughter animals according to their means, and collect the blood into one or more pots.[3] The entrails are collected in other pots, and the meat in yet others, all the different families who are taking part providing pots. The blood is heated to boiling point, and mixed with a certain herb, and then is stirred about with a chopper, which has been heated red hot, in order to make the steam rise. The immediate relatives of the dead man—men, women and children—collect round the pots and cover their heads with their karosses so that they perspire. Then an old man, related neither to the deceased nor to the widow, takes potblack and makes a line on the stomach of each person—" to prevent their getting pains from eating the food." The flesh which has been cooking is now eaten by the relatives only, other members of the kraal eating the entrails, while the blood can be used only by the officiating person and others of like age. These rites—the sweating, the putting on of the black line, and the eating—are all done in the dead person's hut. It may be noticed here that the removal of the

[1] "Social Value of Water among the Namas," 577; Hahn, *Tsuni-||Goam*, 113.
[2] Hoernlé, loc. cit.
[3] The description which follows is taken from Mrs. Hoernlé's account in "The Conception of Sin", loc. cit.

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head from the place of death, a mentioned by Kolb and the other writers on the Cape Hottentots, does not now take place among the Namas. Some of Mrs. Hoernlé's informants stated that in the early days of their annihilation the hut of the dead person was always moved to some other part of the camp,[1] whereas nowadays the hut as a rule is not moved at all; and this latter point Mrs. Hoernlé was able to confirm from personal observation.

The widow takes no part in the rites just described—" she doesn't belong to the man's family," said one of Mrs. Hoernlé's informants indignantly in reply to a question. But from the moment the death has taken place she has become /nas, and must observe the restrictions attendant upon this condition. How long she remains /nas Mrs. Hoernlé could not ascertain. According to some informants, several days may elapse between the burial and the final cleansing, while on the other hand the cleansing is often done immediately after the burial. During the interval, whether it is long or short, the widow must not touch uncooked meat or cold water, go among the cattle, or handle the pots. She is tended by one or more elderly widows, not relatives of either man or wife, who take her through the purification rites when the time comes. First she is thoroughly cleansed from head to foot with moist cowdung, then her whole body is rubbed with a mixture of fat and red mineral powder, and the hair is cut from the top of her head. In cutting off a bit of her hair, they spit on the end of it, and say, " The next husband you get must be a lucky one, and get him quickly." She also puts on a complete set of new clothes. All this time there is a pot on the fire in the hut with a small piece of meat in it which the old woman has fetched from the cooking pots. She takes some of the black from this pot, and puts a mark under each eye, " so that everything the widow meets may be nice to her," and also on the chest, " so that her food may go down nicely." The meat in the pot is eaten by the old woman. The hair cut off is mixed with the ash of the fire, and the whole then removed from the hut and a fresh fire made. The next morning the widow takes the contents of the animal's stomach, and together with the old woman, who goes in front, scatters them over the cattle kraals, saying " let there be plenty of milk ". Then follows the milking of a cow, the fetching of wood, and finally the reintroduction to water, all as in the case of the girls' puberty ceremony.

[1] Cf. Shaw, *Report of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society*, 1821, p. lxxvii; Schultze, *op. cit.*, 227.

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If it is a woman who has died, the treatment of the widower is much the same, save for a few additional details. After he has been cleansed, two cuts are made on his forehead, and the juice of a certain astringent plant, *//abus*, is rubbed in. The hair is also cut from the back of his head. In the old days the cutting in both cases was done with a sharp piece of quartz. Before he has been finally cleansed in this way the widower must not leave the hut. After the hut has also been cleansed by the removal of the fire, etc., some tamarisk and acacia branches are soaked in water over night. Next morning the widower and his attendant go out among the cattle and sheep, and sprinkle them with this water, just as in the re-marriage ceremonies. With this all the immediate mourning rites come to an end. There is no mention of any subsequent rites, or of any further mourning ceremonies.

Beliefs Concerning the Dead

The Hottentot beliefs concerning the fate of the dead have not been investigated in sufficient detail; and concrete information on the subject is contained only in a few fragmentary, but nevertheless important, observations. These leave untouched many problems which arise, and the following description cannot, therefore, be regarded as fully adequate. But it seems safe to say, in the light of the available information, that the Hottentots have no definite conception of an after-world or special land of the dead, nor is there any established theory of reincarnation. Olpp in a short sentence expresses concisely what appears to be the general Hottentot doctrine: "They believe that the soul of a dead person goes with him into the grave, from which it has the faculty of emerging at will as a ghost, in either luminous or terrifying form."[1]

This statement can be amplified somewhat. The ghosts of the dead are known to the Nama by several names—most commonly as */hai /nun*, "fawn feet"; sometimes as */hai khais*, "fawn-coloured people," or *aobo khais*, "people of the shadow"; and also as *//gaunagu*.[2] This last term is of special importance. It is the masculine plural form of *//Gaunab*, and *//Gaunab* is one of the outstanding figures in Hottentot religion and myth, just as he is in the religion of the Northern Bushmen. The term *//gaunab* itself may be used in the singular for "ghost", as appears from a saying noted by

[1] *Angra Pequena*, 89.
[2] Hahn, *Tsuni-//Goam*, 85, 143; Hoernlé, "Social Value of Water among the Nama," 507, 519.

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Very little jealousy is found amongst the married people, even although a man sometimes takes himself to the wrong bed at night. The transgressor, if this comes to light, is then punished severely at the command of the chief.

Death.

The Kaffirs or Hottentots are very long-lived, for most of them, both men and women, reach the ages of eighty, ninety, one hundred, one hundred and ten, one hundred and twenty years and even more[76]).

Dead Hottentots are placed in a sitting position and stark naked[77]) into a deep pit, which is then filled in with earth. On top of this is piled a great heap of stones, so that the corpse may not be dug out of the grave by wild beasts and devoured.

When someone has died, even if it was only a child three months old, and the corpse has been interred, all the relations up to the third degree must, according to old usage, have the little finger of the left hand chopped off to be laid in the grave with the dead person[78]). If the deceased had during her lifetime possessed many cattle which she bequeathed to some relative such as a sister or daughter, the latter (for this applies only to women) must remove a joint from the little finger of each hand before she may take over the cattle in the absence of a last testament; for a sick person may not give away the slightest thing on his deathbed except to those who would lawfully inherit it.

They are loath to see anybody die, and whenever someone falls ill they accordingly fetch a healer. The latter, apart from a sharp double-bladed little knife and a long bit of iron with a small knob at the end, has absolutely no equipment, not even the least bit of ointment. He comes to the patient, whom he bleeds in the back with his knife; he then applies the glowing bit of iron to the patient's

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77) This statement is contradicted by most other writers on the burial customs of the Hottentots. As a rule the dead person was wrapped and tied up in the karosse he wore during life, and then buried (Schapera, op cit., 340 ff.)

78) The practice of finger mutilation by the Hottentots is confirmed by many later writers, but not in all the details mentioned by Dapper. It appears from the available information to have been observed (a) by women who had lost their husbands, and were wishing to remarry, (b) on children whose immediate predecessors had died young, and whose mothers then performed the operation on them as a protective rite against a similar fate (Schapera, op cit., 72).

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religion for Christianity, married a Dutch surgeon, and now lives a scandalous life, having been often banished from the Fort[77]; the third was called Sarah, and she hanged herself in despair because a base Dutchman, in order to have free enjoyment of her, promised her marriage but failed of his word[78].

CHAP. XV.

Their Habits.

These lawless barbarians and immoral pagans practise only those habits to which a blind impulse of nature irresistibly impels them. They take the same position in sitting as a foetus enclosed in the mother's womb, bowing the head upon the knees and embracing it with the elbows. They despise the female sex. They mourn their dead with lamentations for three days, both men and women sitting round the bier of the deceased. They dig a grave to inter the corpse, and cover it with a stone. Abandoned as they are to every vice, they practise the rite of Venus a posteriori; the woman rests upon her side higher up than the man, while he reclines in the hollow that serves him for a bed. Then after the fashion of the beasts they rush on their animal embrace.

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years before his arrival at the Cape! An inquest was duly held, but its report is unfortunately too long to be quoted here in full. It is reproduced in Moodie's Records, pp. 210-16, to which reference may be made by those curious to ascertain the contemporary attitude of the court towards suicide. The entry in the official journal omits most of the accompanying reflections of the court, but is sufficiently interesting to justify reproduction: "This morning, very early, came to our ears that a certain Hottentot girl, about 24 years old, who had given her early childhood, been respectably educated here by civilized burghers, carefully taught the Dutch language, and trained in higher manners, but, without our being able to discover any reasons, hanged herself in the sheep pen of a certain burgher by means of her 'rabelt' band. An inquest was held on the body by the Fiscal, in the presence of Commissioners, but no wounds were found on the body, so that she died from suffocation . . . . According to resolution of the Council, the body of the female Hottentot was towards evening dragged by a donkey to the gallows, and there, as a loathing of such abominations, placed with the head in a fork, and hanged between Heaven and Earth." (D., Dec. 12, 1671.) Three weeks later the Journal contains the following further entries: "Discovered this morning that the fork on which the female Hottentoo had been hanged had been taken down and fallen over. Careful inquiry failed to discover the author" (Jan. 10, 1672). On the following day, "Towards evening, in order to carry out the sentence, the above-mentioned female Hottentoo was again lifted on the fork." (Jan. 11, 1672.)